

TITLE OF THE INVENTION
IMAGE PROCESSING APPARATUS, AND COLOR CORRECTION
METHOD AND LOOKUP TABLE

5 FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to a technique of inputting at least two color difference values, obtaining a saturation value corresponding to these color difference values, and performing color
10 correction and, more particularly, to a technique of efficiently calculating the saturation and hue angle in color information at high speed.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

15 Various methods and apparatuses have conventionally been proposed for color correction of a digital color image. In many color correction processes, the color is managed and corrected by "three attributes of color", i.e., brightness Y, hue angle H,
20 and saturation S. A representative example is an $L^*a^*b^*$ color space. In this color space, the color can be processed by the three attributes, and the color can be intuitively managed and grasped. Digital color data is generally managed by R, G, and B signals. In practice,
25 it is difficult to theoretically manage the color by the R, G, and B signals in color correction. For example, in the $L^*a^*b^*$ color space, the saturation S and

hue angle H are obtained by

$$S = (a^{*2} + b^{*2})^{1/2}$$

$$H = \tan^{-1}(b^*/a^*)$$

Calculation of the saturation and hue angle using
5 these equations requires calculations using a root
function and trigonometric function. When these
functions are calculated by, e.g., software running on
a personal computer, a standard function such as the C
language can be utilized, but "floating-point
10 calculation" is generally required. In a system which
cannot adopt "floating-point calculation", the function
is realized by an algorithm such as "extraction of
square root" which realizes the root calculation by
only integer calculation. Alternatively, the
15 trigonometric function is tabled as far as necessary
precision can be maintained, and the calculation result
of the trigonometric function is obtained by looking up
the table.

The above-mentioned "floating-point calculation"
20 generally poses a large processing load, and the
algorithm using only substitute integer calculation
requires a larger processing load. As described above,
the saturation and hue are the most fundamental
elements in color correction, and the load necessary
25 for conversion processing depends on the number of
pixels of a digital image. That is, the processing
load increases along with an increase in the number of

pixels. It is, therefore, very important to efficiently obtain the saturation and hue at high speed.

By giving attention to the fact that the
5 saturation S and hue angle H can be calculated from the
two color difference signals a^* and b^* , it can be
easily anticipated that the calculation speed can be
increased by a two-dimensional lookup table (to be
referred to as an LUT hereinafter) capable of
10 containing the maximum and minimum values of each
element. This method, however, requires a very
redundant memory, and is inefficient.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

15 The present invention has been made in
consideration of the above situation, and has as its
object to minimize the number of entries of a lookup
table for the saturation and hue angle, and efficiently
performs color correction at high speed by looking up
20 the lookup table.

According to the present invention, there is
provided with a color conversion method of inputting at
least two color difference values and obtaining a
corresponding saturation value, comprising steps of:
25 creating a main lookup table which stores saturation
value for the color difference values, and a sub-lookup
table for obtaining an address for accessing the main

lookup table; determining the address of the main
lookup table in correspondence with two color
difference values on the basis of the sub-lookup table
and a difference between the two color difference
5 values; and obtaining a saturation value corresponding
to the two color difference values from the address
determined in the determining step.

Further, there is provided with a lookup table
for obtaining an output value defined for an input
10 value, comprising: a main lookup table adapted to,
when a definition of an output value has or is regarded
to have symmetry for a plurality of input values, or
when a combination of the plurality of input values is
limited by a specific existence condition, store the
15 output values for the plurality of input values in
consideration of at least one of the symmetry and the
specific existence condition; and a sub-lookup table
adapted to store an address of an entry in which the
plurality of input values are the same, wherein an
20 address of the main lookup table is determined on the
basis of the sub-lookup table and a difference between
the two input values, in correspondence with two
arbitrary input values.

Other features and advantages of the present
25 invention will be apparent from the following
description taken in conjunction with the accompanying
drawings, in which like reference characters designate

the same or similar parts throughout the figures thereof.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

5 The accompanying drawings, which are incorporated in and constitute a part of the specification, illustrate embodiments of the invention and, together with the description, serve to explain the principles of the invention.

10 Fig. 1 is a flow chart showing an example of image processing according to an embodiment of the present invention;

 Fig. 2 depicts a graph for explaining the principle of the embodiment;

15 Fig. 3 depicts a graph for explaining an LUT region in consideration of symmetry of an output value for an input value;

 Fig. 4 depicts a graph for explaining an example of a color difference signal existence range in the YCC color space of an image signal;

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 Fig. 5 depicts a graph for explaining an LUT region necessary to refer to the saturation in the color difference signal existence range of Fig. 4;

 Fig. 6 depicts a graph for explaining symmetry of the hue angle according to the second embodiment of the present invention;

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 Fig. 7 depicts a graph for explaining an example

of region division based on the signs of color difference signals and their magnitude relationship according to the second embodiment;

Fig. 8 depicts a block diagram showing the arrangement of an image processing apparatus according to the embodiment of the present invention; and

Fig. 9 is a flow chart for explaining color correction processing in image processing according to the embodiment.

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DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Preferred embodiments of the present invention will be described in detail below with reference to the accompanying drawings. Before the description of each embodiment, the principle of the embodiment will be briefly explained.

The number of entries of an LUT (LookUp Table) is devised to be substantially halved by utilizing "symmetry" in obtaining the saturation and hue angle.

20 The LUT is specialized in a color space for performing image processing and is so formed as to cover only the color range. In order to obtain necessary results (saturation and hue angle) from the LUT formed in this manner, a main LUT for storing necessary results

25 themselves and a sub-LUT for efficiently accessing an address of the main LUT that corresponds to a combination of necessary elements (in this case, color

difference signals) are prepared. A result stored in the main table is obtained by calculating the lookup address of the main LUT from the sum of a value obtained by looking up the sub-LUT for a smaller one of two elements (saturation and hue angle) and the difference (absolute value) between the two elements. To obtain the hue angle, a result obtained from the main LUT is processed in accordance with a combination of the signs of the two elements and their magnitude relationship, thereby covering the color space.

Image processing to be described below is realized by supplying an image processing program to a computer apparatus such as a personal computer. An assumed image processing program includes driver software which receives an image from an image input device or the like, image editing software which edits an image, and driver software such as a so-called printer driver which outputs an image to an image output device.

The following image processing is executed not only by a computer device, but also by an image input device or image output device. Especially when an image input device such as a digital camera and an image output device such as an ink-jet printer are directly connected to print an image photographed by the digital camera, the following image processing is performed by the image input device or image output

device.

Before a detailed description of the embodiment, image processing to which the embodiment is applied will be explained with reference to the flow chart of Fig. 1.

Fig. 1 is a flow chart showing an example of image correction processing according to the embodiment.

In step S101, an input image is analyzed. In this step, the feature of the input image is analyzed on the basis of the brightness histogram, saturation histogram, or hue histogram. In step S102, image correction processing is determined on the basis of the analysis result in step S101. The processing advances to step S103 to execute image correction processing in accordance with the correction method determined in step S102. Image correction according to the embodiment does not depend on the contents of image correction, but can be applied to all operations which process the saturation and hue in the course of image correction.

The principle according to the embodiment will be explained by a YCC color space. The YCC color space is formed for a general 24-bit RGB digital image signal by three elements:

$$Y = 0.3R + 0.59G + 0.11B$$

$$C1 = R - Y$$

$$C2 = B - Y$$

However, the present invention is not limited to the YCC color space, and can also be applied to the $L^*a^*b^*$ color space and $L^*u^*v^*$ color space.

5 [Description of Principle]

The principle according to the embodiment will be described in detail with reference to Fig. 2. In the embodiment, an LUT of output values is generated for input values in a possible range (domain), with respect
 10 to a function $F(x,y)$ for obtaining an output value corresponding to two input values (integers).

A case in which a saturation for two color difference signals $C1$ ($0 \leq C1 \leq 7$) and $C2$ ($0 \leq C2 \leq 8$) is obtained from the LUT will be described. Each
 15 block (corresponding to each cell) in Fig. 2 corresponds to an output value LUT to be looked up.

If an LUT is created for all combinations, a table having $8 \times 9 = 72$ entries is required. A saturation calculated in advance is stored in each
 20 entry, and the saturation can be obtained from the created LUT for an arbitrary combination ($C1$ and $C2$).

For example, the saturation S is defined by

$$S = \{(C1)^2 + (C2)^2\}^{1/2}$$

and has symmetry for two input values. That is,
 25 saturations stored in respective blocks (LUT) of Fig. 2 are apparently symmetrical about hatched blocks 200. Blocks 201 represented by broken lines in Fig. 2 (lower

right blocks below the hatched blocks 200) are substantially unnecessary.

Further, some regions do not exist in the color space. In other words, not all combinations of two
5 input values in the domain exist. Such nonexistent regions are represented by black blocks 202 in Fig. 2.

From this, the number of blocks (i.e., the number of entries) necessary to refer to the saturation is 72 - the number of unnecessary blocks (34 in the example
10 of Fig. 2) = 38. In this manner, the feature of the embodiment is to minimize the LUT size by utilizing symmetry of an output value for input values and considering the existence condition of combinations of input values.

15 A method of efficiently looking up an LUT created in the above way will be explained. For example, if the LUT is n-dimensionally uniform (in Fig. 2, a set of blocks is rectangular), the table can be easily looked up for an arbitrary input value. That is, an LUT
20 address corresponding to an arbitrary input value can be easily calculated.

If, however, the block (LUT) is created as shown in Fig. 2, it becomes difficult to calculate an address corresponding to an arbitrary combination. Thus, the
25 embodiment creates a sub-LUT in addition to the main LUT for referring to an output value.

A method of creating the main LUT and sub-LUT

will be explained in more detail with reference to Fig. 2.

The main LUT is created along an arrow (chain line) 203 in Fig. 2. Entries associated with necessary blocks are created from the bottom to top with respect to C1, i.e., in a direction in which C2 increases from a small value. Addresses of the hatched blocks 200 that correspond to values of C1 are created as a sub-LUT. More specifically, a sub-LUT (SUB_LUT_Entry[C1]) in Fig. 2 are

$$\text{SUB_LUT_Entry}[C1] = \{0, 9, 17, 24, 29, 32, 35, 37\}$$

A numerical value in [] corresponds to the number of entries of the sub-LUT, and can take C1 = 0 to 7. Numerical values in { } represent the addresses (order when blocks are counted in a direction indicated by the arrow 203) of the hatched blocks 200 in the main LUT for values of C1. That is, SUB_LUT[0] = 0, SUB_LUT[1] = 9, SUB_LUT[2] = 17,.... The address of each block is defined such that the address of the lowermost left hatched block 200 is "0", that of an obliquely upper right hatched block 200 is "9", that of an obliquely upper right hatched block 200 is "17", and the like. By utilizing the created sub-LUT and the difference between the input values (C1 and C2), the address of the main LUT can be calculated by

$$(\text{address of main LUT}) = \text{SUB_LUT}[C1] + (C2 - C1) \quad \dots(1)$$

where $C1 \leq C2$.

The address of a block 204 for $C1 = 2$ and $C2 = 5$ is

$$\text{SUB_LUT}[2] + (C2 - C1) = 17 + (5 - 2) = 20$$

5 The address ("20") of the block 204 is obtained.

For $C1 > C2$, the address of the main LUT is calculated on the basis of the above-described symmetry:

$$(\text{address of main LUT}) = \text{SUB_LUT}[C2] + (C1 - C2) \dots (2)$$

10

As described above, according to the principle of the embodiment, the LUT for obtaining an output value can be downsized as far as an output value for a plurality of input values has symmetry for the input values. Further, the LUT size can be minimized by considering the existence condition of a combination of input values. An address for looking up the LUT can be efficiently calculated at high speed by using the sub-LUT and the difference between input values.

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20 The principle of the embodiment has been described for a two-dimensional LUT (two input values). However, the present invention is not limited to this, and can be applied to creation of an n-dimensional LUT.

To create an LUT, an input value must be an integer. For example, when an input value is required to have decimal-point precision, each input value is properly multiplied by an integer in advance, and then

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an LUT is created. According to this method, the element of an input value is converted into an integer in accordance with necessary precision even in a color space such as the $L^*a^*b^*$ color space which requires a floating-point number. The principle according to the
 5 embodiment can be applied to such color space.

[First Embodiment]

A method of obtaining the saturation in the YCC color space by utilizing the above-described principle
 10 will be explained.

Assume that a brightness and color difference signals for a 24-bit RGB image (8 bits for each color) are defined by

$$Y = 0.3R + 0.59G + 0.11B$$

$$15 \quad C1 = \text{INT}[R - Y]$$

$$C2 = \text{INT}[B - Y]$$

where $\text{INT}[x]$ means converting x into an integer. If the color difference signal must have decimal-point precision, x is multiplied by an integer in advance in
 20 accordance with necessary precision. In the first embodiment, the right of the decimal point is simply discarded. In Fig. 3, the possible ranges of two color difference signals $C1$ and $C2$ are

$$-178 \leq C1 \leq 179$$

$$25 \quad -226 \leq C2 \leq 227$$

The saturation is calculated by the root sum square, which does not depend on the sign apparently. Hence,

an LUT suffices to be created for a hatched portion 300 in Fig. 3. The first embodiment assumes creation of an LUT in the region 300 above a straight line 301 having a slope of "1". The maximum value of the absolute value of C1 is smaller than that of C2, and C1 is defined as the abscissa.

The existence condition of C1 and C2 will be considered.

Fig. 4 shows an example of a possible color difference signal range obtained from a 24-bit RGB image on the basis of the above definition. Since saturation calculation does not depend on the sign of the color difference signal, an LUT is created for a region formed by reversing the ranges of the second, third, and fourth quadrants about corresponding axes so as to overlap the first quadrant.

It should be noted that an address is calculated on the basis of the difference between C2 and C1, as described in the principle, and for $C2 < C1$, an LUT must also satisfy the existence condition (maximum value) of C1 for C2. In other words, the smaller element C2 is defined as the abscissa, the larger element C1 is defined as the ordinate, and an LUT is created for all existent combinations.

The range which satisfies these conditions is a region 500 in Fig. 5. Compared to creation of an LUT in a rectangular region which covers the domains of C1

and C2, the number of entries of the LUT, i.e., the memory capacity for storing LUT data can be apparently saved.

As described in detail in the principle of the embodiment, saturation calculation is done in advance in this region to create a main LUT (S_LUT), and a sub-LUT (SUB_LUT) which stores LUT addresses above a straight line having a slope of "1" for elements along the abscissa is created. As for arbitrary C1 and C2,

10 (i) for $C1 \leq C2$,
 $S = S_LUT[SUB_LUT[C1] + C2 - C1]$
 (ii) for $C1 > C2$
 $S = S_LUT[SUB_LUT[C2] + C1 - C2]$

The address of the main LUT (S_LUT) that represents the saturation can be obtained, thereby obtaining the saturation.

The LUT precision is arbitrarily set, as needed. If floating-point precision is required, a floating-point type array can be adopted. To save the memory capacity, an integer-type array is adopted, and each element (= saturation) is multiplied in advance by an integer enough to obtain necessary precision. As described first in the first embodiment, the precision can be increased by multiplying a color difference signal serving as an input value by an integer in accordance with necessary precision.

[Second Embodiment]

The second embodiment of the present invention will be described as a method of obtaining the hue angle. The saturation described in the first embodiment apparently has symmetry. The hue angle H is
5 given by

$$H = \tan^{-1}(C1/C2)$$

and does not seem to have symmetry. However, from a different viewpoint, the hue angle H can be regarded to have symmetry. That is, the second embodiment utilizes
10 the fact that the angle has periodicity and the trigonometric function has a certain sort of symmetry about a straight line having a slope of "1".

An angle θ' of a point Q ($C2', C1'$) axisymmetrical about a straight line 600 having a slope
15 of "1" can be calculated by $(90 - \theta)$ using an angle θ stored in correspondence with a point P ($C1, C2$) in Fig. 6. Furthermore, the range is divided into eight regions (a) to (h) in accordance with the signs of the input values C1 and C2 and their magnitude
20 relationship, as shown in Fig. 7. The hue angle of each region can be calculated as shown in Fig. 7 on the basis of the angle θ of the first region (region (a)) obtained from the LUT.

The number of entries necessary for an LUT for
25 referring to the hue angle also suffices to be the number of entries of the region (a), similar to the first embodiment described above.

According to the second embodiment, the principle of the present invention can be applied when a function for obtaining an output value for input elements has symmetry for the input elements, and also when the
5 function does not have perfect symmetry but can be regarded to have symmetry from a different viewpoint.

Fig. 8 is a block diagram showing the schematic arrangement of an image processing apparatus having the lookup table according to the above-described
10 embodiments. Color correction of each pixel data of color image data input from an image input unit 83 will be explained.

Reference numeral 80 denotes a CPU such as a microprocessor which executes various control
15 operations in accordance with control programs stored in the program memory of a RAM 81. Reference numeral 82 denotes a display unit such as a liquid crystal display or CRT which can display an input image or a color image having undergone color correction. The
20 image input unit 83 may be, e.g., a tuner which receives a television signal, a playback device which inputs image data stored in a storage medium such as a CD, DVD, or VHS, or an interface which can input color image data from the Internet or the like. The image
25 input unit 83 suffices to input color image data to the image processing apparatus. Reference numeral 84 denotes a main LUT described above. The main LUT 84 is

downsized by utilizing the fact that an output value (saturation value) for a plurality of input values (color difference values) has symmetry for the input values (color difference signal). The main LUT 84
5 stores a saturation value corresponding to input color difference values. Reference numeral 85 denotes a sub-LUT described above which stores an auxiliary address for accessing the main LUT 84. Reference numeral 86 denotes a network interface which interfaces
10 a communication line or network.

Fig. 9 is a flow chart for explaining processing executed in the image processing apparatus. The program which executes this processing is stored in the program memory. The CPU 80 executes the processing in
15 accordance with the program stored in the program memory, realizing control processing.

In step S1, digital color image data (RGB data) is input from the image input unit 83. The processing advances to step S2 to obtain a brightness signal Y and
20 color difference signals (C1 (R-Y) and C2 (R-B)) from RGB data of a given pixel of the input image data. The processing advances to step S3 to compare the color difference signals C1 and C2. The sub-LUT 85 is accessed on the basis of the value of a smaller color
25 difference signal, in this case, C1 ($C1 \leq C2$), and an output [SUB_LUT(C1)] is obtained. The processing advances to step S4 to obtain the address of the main

LUT 84 in accordance with the above-mentioned equation (1) (equation (2) for $C1 > C2$) on the basis of the difference value between the color difference signals $C2$ and $C1$ and $[SUB_LUT(C1)]$ obtained in step S3. The processing advances to step S5 to access the main LUT 84 on the basis of the address obtained in step S4 and read out data (in this case, a saturation value) from the main LUT 84. In step S6, the read saturation value is set as the saturation of the pixel. The processing advances to step S7 to determine whether all pixels of the input image data have been processed. If NO in step S7, the processing returns to step S2 to execute the above processing. If YES in step S7, color correction processing ends.

When image data output from the image input unit 83 is an analog signal, the image processing apparatus is equipped with an A/D converter which converts the analog signal into a digital signal. The digital image signal is then processed.

[Other Embodiment]

The present invention may be applied to a system including a plurality of devices (e.g., a host computer, interface device, reader, and printer) or an apparatus (e.g., a copying machine or facsimile apparatus) formed from a single device.

The object of the present invention is also achieved when a storage medium (or recording medium)

which records software program codes for realizing the functions of the above-described embodiments is supplied to a system or apparatus, and the computer (or the CPU or MPU) of the system or apparatus reads out and
5 executes the program codes stored in the storage medium. In this case, the program codes read out from the storage medium realize the functions of the above-described embodiments, and the storage medium which stores the program codes constitutes the present
10 invention. The functions of the above-described embodiments are realized when the computer executes the readout program codes. Also, the functions of the above-described embodiments are realized when an OS (Operating System) or the like running on the computer
15 performs part or all of actual processing on the basis of the instructions of the program codes.

Furthermore, the present invention includes a case in which, after the program codes read out from the storage medium are written in the memory of a
20 function expansion card inserted into the computer or the memory of a function expansion unit connected to the computer, the CPU of the function expansion card or function expansion unit performs part or all of actual processing on the basis of the instructions of the
25 program codes and thereby realizes the functions of the above-described embodiments.

When the present invention is applied to the

storage medium, the storage medium stores program codes corresponding to the above-described flow charts.

The above embodiments have described the YCC color space, but a lookup table may be created in
5 another color space such as the $L^*a^*b^*$ uniform color space.

As has been described above, according to the embodiments, a saturation for arbitrary color difference signals can be efficiently acquired with a
10 minimum memory capacity by creating an LUT on the basis of the principle described in the embodiments in a color space in which color processing is performed in advance.

According to the second embodiment, a hue angle
15 for arbitrary color difference signals can be obtained with the same LUT size even for the hue angle by utilizing a combination of the signs of input signals and their magnitude relationship.

The present invention is not limited to the
20 embodiments, and the principle of the present invention can be applied when an output value for a plurality of input values has or is regarded to have symmetry for the input values.

The present invention is not limited to the above
25 embodiments and various changes and modification can be made within the spirit and scope of the present invention. Therefore, to apprise the public of the

scope of the present invention, the following claims
are made.